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(The following extracts are unedited, taken directly from the English-language version of Antara, the official Indonesian news service.)

US TO DETAIN HAMBALI INDEFINITELY

New York, Feb 28 (ANTARA) - The United States government has said it would continue to detain Indonesian Hambali alias Ridwan Isamuddin, the suspected mastermind of the Bali bombing, indefinitely. Contacted by ANTARA here on Wednesday, US Department of Defence spokesman Lt. Col. Jeffrey Gordon confirmed that Hambali would remain in the US prison despite the fact that he had yet to be indicted. Gordon said Hambali would be sent back to Indonesia after he had been tried by the US Military Commission on charges of being a terrorist mastermind who planned major terrorist attacks in Southeast Asia. "If found guilty, he (Hambali) must probably serve his prison sentence here. If not, we will send him back to the Indonesian government," Gordon said at Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. Hambali's fate remains unclear as the US government has yet to ascertain when the Indonesian national who has been heralded as the leader of alleged terrorist network Jamaah Islamiyah will be tried by the US Military Commission. "Not this year," Gordon said as he was asked when Hambali would be tried. He said it would take years for the Military Commission to try around 80 terror suspects being detained at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, and only about three of them aside Hambali would be tried this year. Gordon admitted that Hambali was one of the terror suspects being detained at Guantanamo Bay but he refused to explain why the Indonesian government had to date been denied consular access to meet Hambali.

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